



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Arthur Conan Doyle

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Arthur Conan Doyle

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Art

Poster, book jacket, collage,
illustration

Comprehension

Identifying clues, creative
and critical thinking,
predicting, interpreting,
evaluation, observation

Thinking

Research, compare/contrast,
analysis, problem solving,
supporting details,
sequencing, deduction

Writing

Letter, diary, essay, journal,
poem, description,
paraphrase, biography

Literary Elements

Style, point of view, theme,
Gothicism, foil, setting,
imagery, characterization

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, personal
experiences, oral reports

Genre: mystery

Setting: London and Devonshire (Dartmoor); 1889

Point of View: first-person participant

Narrator: Dr. Watson

Themes: good vs. evil, natural vs. supernatural, reality vs. fantasy

Conflict: person vs. person

Protagonists: Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson

Antagonists: the hound, Stapleton

Tone: mysterious, suspenseful

Date of Publication: Published in monthly installments in *The Strand Mystery Magazine* (August 1901–April 1902) with illustrations; book was published on March 25, 1902

Summary

The great detective Sherlock Holmes is asked to solve the mystery of the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. The legend of the Hound of the Baskervilles declares that there is a curse on the family because of Sir Hugo Baskerville's violence toward a yeoman's daughter years before. A great hound hovered over Sir Hugo's dead body, and many believe the curse of the hound continues to pursue the Baskerville family. Sir Charles' heir, Sir Henry Baskerville, receives a warning in a cryptic note telling him not to go onto the moor. Holmes sends his assistant, Dr. Watson, to live at Baskerville Hall with Sir Henry and investigate the source of the warning. Holmes remains in London, receiving letters from Dr. Watson reciting the events in Devonshire at the hall and on the moor. He tells Holmes of the Barrymores' strange activities at night, the tension between Mr. Stapleton and his sister, Sir Henry's romantic interest, the criminal Selden's relationship to the Barrymores, the stranger on the moor, and the howling of the hound. The interweaving of the Stapletons, the Barrymores, Dr. Mortimer, Sir Henry, Frankland, Laura Lyons, and Selden add to the complexity of the mystery. Holmes himself secretly comes to the moor and observes various events. Ultimately, Holmes pronounces Stapleton as the murderer and resolves all the loose ends of the mystery.

Characters

Sherlock Holmes: brilliant and renowned British detective; hired to discover what really happened to Sir Charles Baskerville

Dr. Watson: assistant to Sherlock Holmes; goes to Dartmoor to observe and report findings

Dr. Mortimer: doctor from Devonshire; friend of Sir Charles Baskerville; brings the manuscript and story of the hound to Sherlock Holmes and Watson

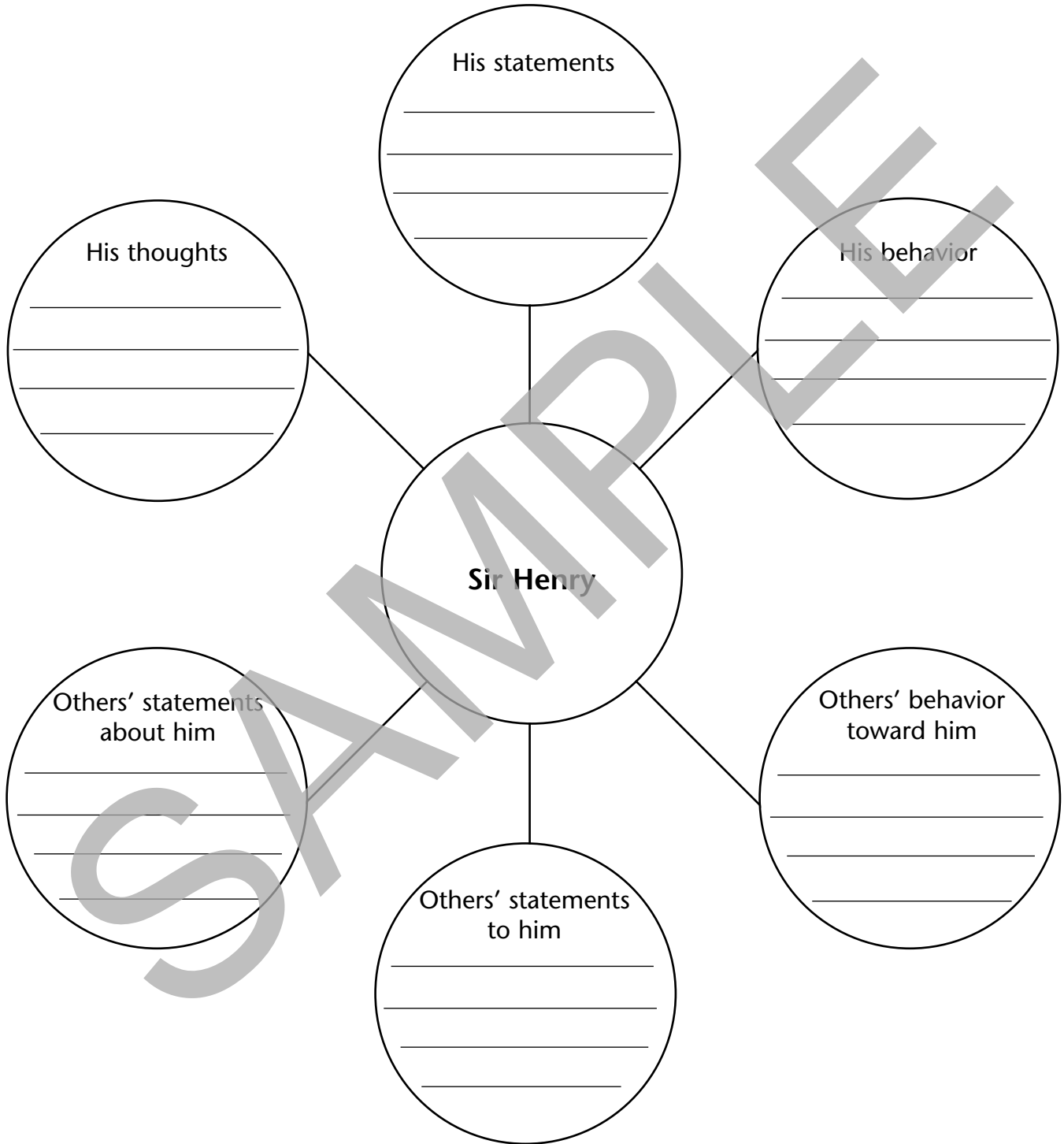
Sir Hugo Baskerville: Baskerville ancestor whose wicked and wanton ways led to the curse on the Baskerville family

Sir Charles Baskerville: kind but superstitious Baskerville heir who dies of heart failure after seeing the hound on the moor

Sir Henry Baskerville: Baskerville heir who arrives from Canada to take up his position at Baskerville Hall

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web below.



Chapters 1–3, pp. 9–45

The reader is introduced to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. They are using logical reasoning to discover facts about a man who has left his cane at Holmes' office. Eventually, Dr. Mortimer arrives to see the detective, and Holmes and Watson discover most of their deductions are accurate. Dr. Mortimer has a manuscript containing the history of Sir Hugo Baskerville and the beginning of the legend of the Hound of the Baskervilles, the horrific dog that is allegedly haunting the Baskerville family. Sir Charles Baskerville's tragic death from heart failure is described, and Holmes offers his hypotheses of the scene.

Vocabulary

ferrule (10)
erroneous (11)
incredulously (13)
astutely (14)
anthropological (16)
wanton (21)
leagues (22)
anon (23)
bemused (23)
*roosterers (24)
scion (26)
prosaic (28)
chimerical (31)
diabolical (37)
immaculate (41)
*archaic spelling

Discussion Questions

1. Analyze the story found in the manuscript that Dr. Mortimer brings to Sherlock Holmes. (*In the 17th century, Sir Hugo Baskerville, a wealthy landowner in England, had a reputation for being wild and immoral. He also had a cruel side to him. Unfortunately, he lusted for one of the nearby peasant girls who lived on his land. She rejected him, so he kidnapped her and brought her to his manor. After much drinking with his friends, he decided to take some food and drink to her. When he arrived in her apartment, he found that she had climbed down the ivy and had run back home. Furious, Sir Hugo retrieved his horse and hounds to pursue her. His friends followed. They found the maiden dead from fright and exhaustion. Sir Hugo was lying next to her, having been killed by a huge, beastly hound. This event was the beginning of the legend known as the Hound of the Baskervilles.* pp. 21–25)
2. Explain why the content of the manuscript is important to the story. (*The manuscript lays the foundation for the entire novel: a wealthy family with land, a curse on the family, a huge dog, the wanton and cruel character that runs in the family, and a shadow that falls on future generations. It prepares the reader for the mystery ahead by creating questions in the reader's mind.* pp. 21–25)
3. Describe Sir Charles Baskerville. (*Sir Charles is a gentleman who came from a long line of gentry. He is a widower who lives a simple life at his ancestral home—Baskerville Hall. Known for having a weak heart, he has a reputation for kindness, amiability, and generosity. Earning money abroad, he has brought his fortune back to England and has used it to improve his home- and county-groups [local and county charities]. Many individuals have benefited from his wealth. Sir Charles was thinking of running for Parliament before he died.* pp. 26, 27, 38)
4. What skills make Sherlock Homes an expert detective? (*excellent thinker, observant, knowledgeable, thorough, asks in-depth questions, logical, self-confident, a bit arrogant about his ability, has built a reputation of being the best, ability to sort and evaluate, intense concentration, excellent at deduction and inference,* pp. 9–17, 40–43)
5. Why doesn't Holmes give credence to the supernatural nature of the Hound of the Baskervilles? (*Holmes is a true Victorian—a man of science. In fact, he considers himself a “scientific expert.” A supernatural hound would be totally against his character and thinking because he deals in the world of reality. He delves into unsolved cases and traces facts rather than fantasy. The few facts he knows about Sir Charles' death [footprint, howling, and sightings] point to a real animal as far as he is concerned. He comments that “a devil with merely local powers...would be too inconceivable a thing.”* pp. 35–39)

6. Contrast Sir Hugo and Sir Charles Baskerville. (*Sir Hugo: wealthy, landed gentry, mean, oppressive, arrogant, “wild,” “profane,” “godless,” “wanton and cruel humor,” had an “evil name,” kidnapper, reveler, curser, said he would give his “soul to the Powers of Evil”;* *Sir Charles: wealthy, talented businessman, kind, generous, compassionate, good neighbor, a gentleman, lived simply, pp. 21–25, 26–28*)
7. Why do you think Sir Charles Baskerville was waiting in the alley? Why did he go beyond the gate when he did not usually do so? (*Answers will vary.*)
8. Discuss the effectiveness of a novel written in first-person participant. (*First person enables the reader to take part in the experiences of the narrator [Dr. Watson]. The reader knows what is occurring each minute in clear detail. The excitement and tension of the mystery is better conveyed by a first-person narrator and gives the reader the feeling that he is being spoken to directly. First person brings the reader close to the narrator, making the action more alive and real.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Begin a Prediction Chart (see pages 8–9 of this guide) to use as you read the novel.
2. Begin the Story Map on page 10 of this guide.
3. Elements within a story that are scary, supernatural, or lend mystery to a story are often known as gothic elements. Make a list of gothic elements or language as you read *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
4. Sherlock Holmes states, “The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes” (p. 41). In 2–3 paragraphs, explain this quotation and give examples of the “obvious things” to which Holmes may have been referring.

Chapters 4–6, pp. 46–91

Sir Henry Baskerville arrives from Canada and meets Dr. Mortimer, Sherlock Holmes, and Watson. Sir Henry has received a cryptic note, warning him against going onto the moor. Also, while he is at the hotel, a new brown boot is stolen from him. Holmes and Watson know that Sir Henry is being followed. Oddly, Sir Henry discovers his new boot in his room; however, an old black boot disappears soon after. Holmes decides to send Watson to watch over Sir Henry at Baskerville Hall. As they arrive in Devonshire, Sir Henry’s home appears to be a dark, dreary, and drab residence. Late that night, Watson hears the heart-wrenching crying of a woman.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Sir Henry Baskerville. (*Sir Henry is a young man about 30 years old. He is stocky, with thick, black eyebrows and a strong-looking face. His dark eyes are small but alert at all times, and his temper is evident, but his manner represents that of a gentleman. He appears to have spent much of his life outdoors. He is not frightened by the legend of his family’s curse, nor by the person who is attempting to scare him away from Baskerville Hall. pp. 46–56*)
2. Analyze Chapter 5, entitled “Three Broken Threads.” (*The three threads are clues that Holmes follows. The first thread refers to the whereabouts of Mr. Barrymore, a servant in Baskerville Hall. Holmes sends a telegraph to Barrymore in order to determine if he is at home or in London. The second thread is the origin of the paper used in the note received by Sir Henry. But after sending a young boy to visit many hotels and dig through trashcans, Holmes does not find anything helpful. The third thread is identifying the spy in the cab, but the spy outwits Holmes by telling the cabman that his name is Sherlock Holmes. pp. 61, 63–77*)